

In the Claims

1. (Original) A welding apparatus comprising an enclosure, an end panel having a receptacle area formed therein and a base having an end interfitted into the receptacle area of the end panel, the base having at least one snap having a distal end with an opening therein and extending outwardly from the end of the panel, the end panel having at least one ramp formed thereon that is generally in alignment with the at least one snap, whereby the distal end of the at least one snap is engaged to the at least one ramp to retain the end panel to the base.

2. (Previously Presented) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the end panel and base are comprised of molded plastic materials.

3. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the at least one snap is a U-shaped configuration with the closed distal end extending outwardly from the molded end panel.

4. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the at least one snap comprises a pair of snaps formed at the end of the base and the at least one ramp comprises a pair of ramps formed in the receptacle area of the end panel.

5. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the receptacle area comprises angled internal lateral surfaces and the base includes angled external sides adapted to interfit in close proximity to the angled internal surfaces of the end panel to stabilize the affixation of the base and the end panel.

6. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the base has an upper surface and the receptacle area includes a plurality of vertically oriented ribs adapted to fit over and contact the upper surface of the base to provide vertical stability to the base interfitted to the end panel.

7. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the at least one ramp formed within the receptacle area of the end panel has an upper surface inclined upwardly in the direction away from the base and ending in a rear vertical wall.

8. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 7 wherein the distal end of the at least one snap locks against the rear vertical wall of the at least one ramp.

9. (Original) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 8 wherein the end panel has an access opening to allow access to the distal end of the snap to enable the vertical lifting of the distal end to detach the distal end from its locking engagement with the rear vertical wall of the at least one ramp to detach the base from the end panel.

10. (Original) A subassembly for a welding apparatus comprising a molded plastic base and a molded plastic end panel affixed together, the end panel having a receptacle area formed therein and the base having an end interfitted into the receptacle area of the end panel, the base having at least one snap having a distal end with an opening therein and extending outwardly from the end of the base, the end panel having at least one ramp formed thereon that is generally in alignment with the at least one snap, whereby the distal end of the at least one snap is engaged to the at least one ramp to retain the end panel to the base.

11. (Original) The subassembly as defined in claim 10 wherein the at least one ramp has a top surface that is inclined upwardly in the direction away from the base to form a vertical rear wall, and the end wall has a recess proximate to the rear wall.

12. (Original) The subassembly as defined in claim 10 wherein the end panel has an access opening to allow a tool to reach the distal end of the at least one snap to move the distal end vertically.

13. (Previously Presented) The subassembly as defined in claim 10 wherein the at least one snap comprises a pair of snaps and the at least one ramp comprises a pair of ramps.

14. (Original) The subassembly as defined in claim 11 wherein the at least one snap comprising a U-shaped snap having a closed distal end.

15. (Original) The subassembly as defined in claim 13 wherein the receptacle area has lateral internal surfaces and the base has lateral external sides that are complementarily configured to the lateral internal surface so that the lateral external sides of the base fit in a close mating relationship within the lateral internal surfaces of the receptacle area of the end panel.

16. (Original) The subassembly as defined in claim 15 where the lateral internal surfaces of the base are angled surfaces.

17. (Original) A method of assembling a end panel to the base of a welding apparatus, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a molded base with at least one snap having a distal end and an elongated opening formed therein, the at least one snap extending outwardly therefrom,

providing a molded plastic panel having at least one inclined ramp formed thereon leading to a vertical rear wall and having a recess formed proximate the rear wall,

inserting the molded base into the molded plastic panel to cause the snap to ride upwardly along the inclined ramp and enter into the recess to lock the distal end of the at least one snap against the rear wall of the at least one ramp to retain the base to the end panel.

18. (Original) The method as defined in claim 17 wherein the step of providing a molded base with at least one snap comprises providing a molded base with a pair of U-shaped snaps.

19. (Original) The method as defined in claim 17 wherein the molded plastic panel has an access opening proximate the rear wall of the ramp and the method further comprises the step of inserting a tool through the access opening to move the distal end of the snap vertically upwardly to unlock the snap from the rear wall of the ramp.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as defined in claim 17 wherein the step of providing at least one snap comprises providing a pair of snaps and the step of providing at least one ramp comprised providing a pair of ramps.

21. (Previously Presented) The welding apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein the at least one snap of the base is movable relative to the base to allow passage of the at least one ramp therealong.

22. (Previously Presented) The subassembly as defined in claim 10 wherein the at least one ramp of the end panel is immovably connected thereto in response to the at least one snap moving thereacross.

23. (Previously Presented) The method as defined in claim 17 wherein the step of inserting the molded base further comprises deflecting the snap along the inclined ramp during insertion.